ONLY A SWITCHMAN.

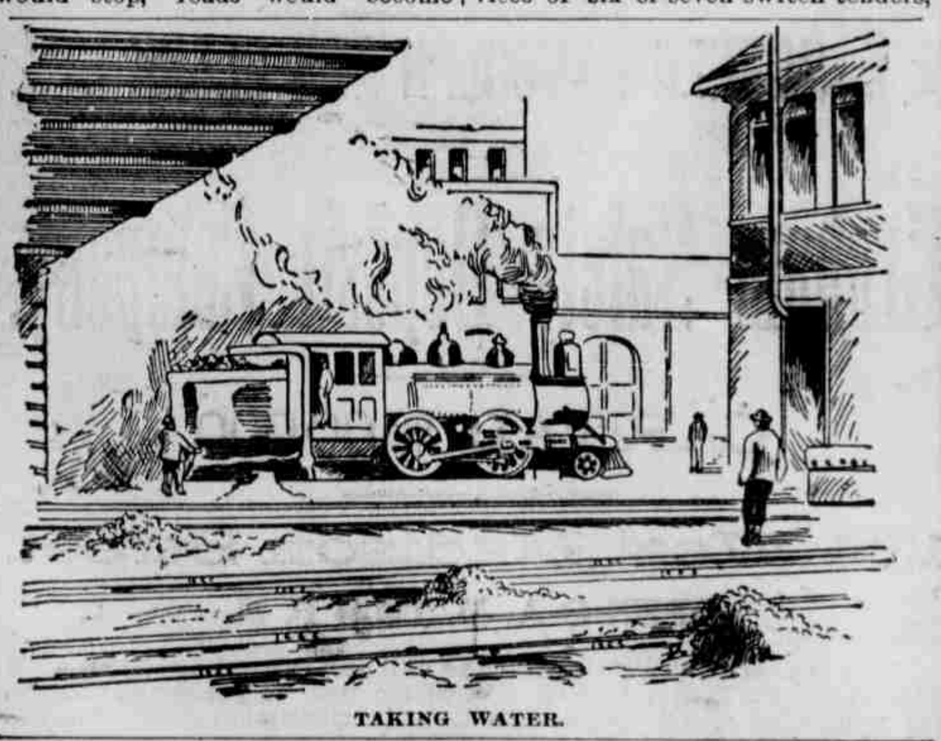
HE FACES MORE DANGER THAN A SOLDIER.

Taking Up Long Trains and Guarding the Public—A Courageous Lot of Men Who Give Their Lives to Preserve Others—A Labor-Saving Device.

Thousands Killed Yearly.

Eight hundred thousand men find employment on the various railroad lines which traverse the United States, and of these fully one-fourth are stationed in the yards as switchmen. Of all the men who have anything to do with railroading there are none of whom the public know so little as switchmen. Did you ever notice the one-armed, one-legged man waving his red flag at the crossing? He is known as a flagman, but he was a switchman once, and there are many hundreds of others just like him.

Did you ever see a one-armed man struggling with the patent lock of a switch, his empty sleeve fluttering in the wind? He is only tending switches now, but he once belonged to a switch crew, rode on an engine, and helped to make up the long trains which carried passengers and freight out of Chicago, says the Inter Ocean. It is a dangerous calling—this occupation of switchman, with meager chance of promotion and little recognition by the public, but it is a necessary and important one. They are as much a part of the road as the conductor, who takes charge of the train when it is made up, or the engineer who pulls it, for without them trains would stop, roads would become



TAKING WATER.

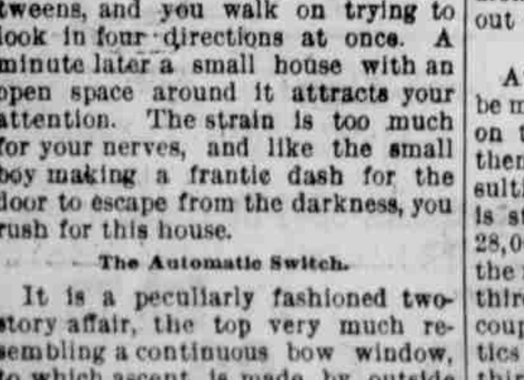
blocked, and traffic finally cease altogether. More than one thousand men are employed in this capacity in the yards about Chicago.

Multifarious Duties.

No one can fully understand the multifarious duties which fall to the lot of switchmen without paying a visit to some one of the many yards. About the first man you meet will be a great brawny, ruddy-faced son of Ireland, who, in rich brogue, will order you out of the way of a moving locomotive (for you are almost certain to stand on the wrong track), and then sarcastically inform you that this is a "Toosda" or a "Winsda," and that the "Enginer" has a bit o' mind to use that particular piece of track. You realize the possibility of this and move. A second later your informant hops on to the pilot of the "Ingine," and with inimitable style waves you a salute and inquires "How long hev yees bin toe town?" or tells you with a broad grin that "Oi always knows a jay, sur, case his fate stick out forninst hes back." Before you can make a retort the engine has borne your tormentor out of reach of your voice, and you turn just in time to see another man making frantic motions and yelling at the top of his voice, "Gaet uff dose track, da anyan kum, ef yo wan a yob go by da mon, es is bethar es dese." You "gaet" just in time, and realize what a close call you have had as the iron steed with a clang and sputter of escaping steam rolls over the spot on which you stood just a moment before. You resolve to be more careful now, and walk between the tracks, but there is such a labyrinth of iron railing that only the experienced can recognize the betweens, and you walk on trying to look in four directions at once. A minute later a small house with an open space around it attracts your attention. The strain is too much for your nerves, and like the small boy making a frantic dash for the door to escape from the darkness, you rush for this house.

The Automatic Switch.

It is a peculiarly fashioned two-story affair, the top very much resembling a continuous bow window, to which ascent is made by outside



AUTOMATIC SWITCH-BOARD.

steps. A stout, florid, well-built man is descending, and in a trice you have asked if you can go up. Turning his good-natured face to you, and taking a pipe from his mouth, he says, "What ist dot?" The request is repeated, and a light shines in his eyes as he answers: "Kumen-see-de-haus-in. Uh' yah, yah," and then strolls off among the moving cars, just as a man appears at the door above and [illegible]

of his country, only you did not know it.

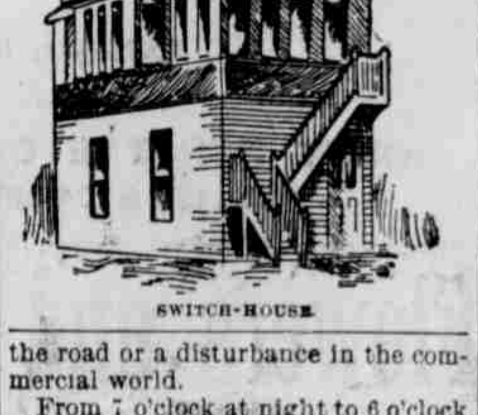
Once in the little house a good view of the yards can be had from all sides, and you commence to realize the danger which these switchmen brave in the performance of their duty. In and out, over and under the moving trains, waving their arms and shouting to the engineers, apparently with as little thought of their perilous position as a man on an ox cart, a happy lot, who seem too busy to let the cares of life worry them for a moment. The switchman's work is not all manual labor, though it is rough and dirty. He must be cool and quick of action at critical moments; he must have a perfect conception of force and distance, and be conversant with the time-cards of all the roads, for those in charge of the transfer trains often visit two or three yards during the day and must give right of way to regular trains.

Some of the stations built within the past two or three years are provided with automatic switch-boards, fashioned not unlike the old-time Gillian telephone board, and operated on the same principle. This is placed in the second story of the switch-house, where a view can be had of all approaches.

A Labor-saving Device.

Sitting before a long table containing a row of numbered levers one man controls the switches that let all trains in and out of the yards at the station. This is regarded as a labor-saving device by the railroad companies, and, though it costs more to operate, it dispenses with the services of six or seven switch tenders, placing the responsibility in the hands of two men and reducing the possibility of accident. At the older stations the old-time manner of managing the yards is still in vogue, and absolute dependence is placed upon the switchmen, who must throw the switches, make the couplings, and be responsible for the safety of all cars arriving or leaving the yards.

One of the most important duties is that of examining the condition of cars while making up trains, and reporting any defect. A weak or imperfect coupling is sure to make trouble, and a single accident may mean serious loss to many patrons of



SWITCH-HOUSE.

the road or a disturbance in the commercial world.

From 7 o'clock at night to 6 o'clock in the morning is the busiest time in the yard. Then they are making up the trains for the next day. All night long the engines puff and sputter and throw myriads of sparks from their stacks, dropping a car here and one there, like the mail clerk distributing letters, until the engines stand alone exhausting steam as if tired out with work.

A Perilous Life.

At night, too, the switchmen must be more careful. They must be ever on the watch lest a misstep throw them in the way of a moving car, resulting in the loss of a limb or, what is still more serious, life. Of the 28,000 employes killed and injured on the railroads the past year, fully one-third met with the accident while coupling or uncoupling cars. Statistics show that one man in every thirty who follows railroading meets with an accident, and the chances are about equal when one does occur that the unfortunate is a switchman.

In a law recently passed by the Legislature compelling railroads to equip their rolling stock with automatic brakes and couplers, the switchmen have some hope of lightening their labors and removing the possibility of accident. This will also tend to reduce the rates of insurance, a $500 policy being the most any company will take, and for which they charge the extortionate premium of $37.

An engineer, fireman, foreman, and two helpers constitute a switch crew, unless there is a grade, in which case two extra helpers are carried. When hired by the month they receive a salary of from $45 to $55, ten hours constituting a day, though they not infrequently work extra time when trains are late or the yards blocked. No regular hour is set for dinner and they are compelled to eat at odd moments whenever they [illegible] pay for overtime are the cause of the switchmen advocating a scale fixing the pay by the hour at the rate of twenty-five cents for day men and twenty-seven cents for night workers.

Those who remain any length of time at this employment do so because they can hope for promotion when occasion offers, or because they can find nothing better. This leads to a constant change of employes, which explains why the foreign element predominates, and why there is often more or less friction in their clans.

An Industrious Lawyer.

The ingenuity of lawyers in making business for themselves is in course of illustration in a reference case now in progress down-town. An estate is involved in the litigation. An unsuccessful contest of a will left some of the litigants dissatisfied. This furnished the lawyer his chance. He found that about 125 persons might be entitled to a dip into the estate if the will could be broken. He addressed a note to each of them, proposing to attack the will, and tendering his services on a contingent arrangement. In this note he informed them that proceedings would be begun, and that he would make defendants of all who did not join his movement. With the apparent necessity forced upon them of accepting his services without charge or hiring various lawyers to protect their interests, they flocked to him. When proceedings were started, he issued circulars of information to his clients, and kept them posted on every move. This involved some trouble and expense, in which the clients were asked to assist. In this way, while receiving nothing that could be called a fee from anyone, the small contributions of his 125 clients are said to have helped the lawyer's bank account an average of $300 per month. As he is very industrious and does his work earnestly, his clients are glad to help him out, and, while he seems to be basing his chances of reward solely on the success of his suit, he is making quite a comfortable income.—New York Times.

Parboiling.

There are various and sundry whims about cooking, but none of them are more absurd than the idea that beans must be parboiled. One would hardly think of turning off the water from meat while it is cooking, but it might just as well be done, as in either case it takes away a great portion of the nutriment and flavor of the dish.

Beans should be carefully looked over, thoroughly washed and put to soak over night in about their bulk of water. Put them in the kettle soon after breakfast the next morning, add about as much water as at first, place them where they will not burn, and let them cook slowly and without stirring until about 10 o'clock. Then add half a pound of salt pork thoroughly washed and cut across the rind in small dice. Place the pork on top of the beans and let it boil for an hour or more. Then lift the meat out, turn the beans and liquor into a baking pan, press the pork down until only the rind is out of the water and bake in a slow oven for several hours.

Many persons complain that beans are indigestible and cause dyspepsia. It is said by eminent authorities that if beans are cooked for six or eight hours no complaint of this sort can be made against them.—New York Ledger.

The Artfulness of the Ant.

Like many other insects, the ant is very fond of sugar, to obtain which it employs a skill that is almost incredible. An observer thought he had protected his sugar basin from the attentions of a number of ants by placing it in the center of a vessel full of water. To his amazement, however, he found that they got at the sugar by climing up the wall of the room to the part of the ceiling that was just over the ceiling. From this point they allowed themselves to fall down among the sugar. Several that were carried by the draught past the bowl fell into the surrounding water, and would all have been drowned but for the efforts of their mates, who succeeded in rescuing some of them. The truth of this singular occurrence is vouched for by the witnesses of it.

Day of the Dark Woman.

The fair-haired woman, lissome and loving, has had her day. Dark-eyed beauty, framed in dusky tresses, seems more in keeping with the tall and queenly type of woman that has of late supplanted the petite ideal of the old days. Men say it is because the tall woman makes such exquisite pictures, leaning and swaying in graceful poses, because she is infinitely nicer to make love to than the little woman. She can cuddle her head up under a man's chin, touch his cheek with her smooth, velvety face, while a little woman, even if she stands on tiptoe, only rumples his shirt front. And when she takes to ordering a man about he doesn't feel quite so much like a fool as when a little woman takes on the airs of a commanding officer.

Scores but a Single Victim.

Of all the various legal measures that have been adopted in order to discourage suicide none has worked very well. Since the New York law was passed but a single conviction has been had under it. This was twelve years ago, when a man undertook to drown himself. He was rescued and was sentenced to Sing Sing, and he is there yet.

Little Dot—"Oh, dear! I wish I wasn't a girl." Teacher—"You do! Why?" Little Dot—"'Cause I hate [illegible]

GIVEN UP BY THE SEA.

A Strange Craft of Many Years Ago Floated by a Volcanic Upheaval.

The Norwegian bark Elsa Andersen came into port a day or two ago with a strange-looking vessel in tow, says a dispatch from Galveston, Tex. This was a small brig of English build, dismasted and in need of repairs, which had been sunk more than fifty years ago, judging from its ancient appearance and awkward rigging, so sailors who have looked at it say.

On the afternoon of Feb. 17, off the coast of Faroe Islands, where the Elsa Andersen had been blown by a recent gale, there was a violent upheaval of the sea about two miles distant from the spot where she was riding, that sent several waves sweeping over her which did much damage and threatened to submerge her entirely. When the alarm caused by this sudden sea had subsided there was seen about a mile off a wreck which had not been there before the upheaval of the bottom of the sea, a phenomenon corresponding to an earthquake on land.

The wreck excited much interest among the officers and passengers of the Norwegian vessel, and an order was issued to approach the strange craft, when it was seen that the remains of her rigging, stumps of masts, and the hull itself were covered by thousands of sea shells, causing the wreck to present the appearance of the minature ships of shellwork to be purchased at any seaside town. The leaks which had sunk the vessel were now stopped by an accumulation of barnacles, and the derelict now rode the waves like a duck.

A boat load of sailors was dispatched to board the wreck, and they found the hold and the under decks water tight save for a few feet of water which, covering the cargo, had sunk her. But this cargo and the other contents of the ship were entirely destroyed. In what had evidently been the captain's berth were found several iron-bound chests, which had resisted to some extent the ravages of time and the sea, but on being opened the contents were found to be reduced to a sort of pulp, with the exception of a leather bag. This had become hardened until it was necessary to break it open with an ax, when from it poured a quantity of rusty discs, which, being cleaned, proved to be golden guineas of the year 1809, and amounting to the sum of £1,005.

There were also several watches of gold and a stomacher of pearls; these, however, are valueless, having been blackened by the action of the water. This wreck was attached to the Elsa Andersen by a cable and towed to this port, where it is attracting crowds of visitors.

On the fourth day after its detachment from the bottom of the sea by the quake, the water was all pumped out of the derelict, when it was found to contain three skeletons, two of them men and the other a woman's, this last being of a person of gigantic build, and in life of nearly seven feet in height. About the neck of one of the male skeletons was a chain of gold, to which was attached a silver crucifix and evidently a rosary.

A HEROIC GIRL.

Bertha Morton, Who Conducts a Ferry in Southern Connecticut.

Miss Bertha Morton, a 19-year-old girl who has charge of the Flat Rock Ferry on Eight Mile River, in the southern part of Connecticut, is a heroine and has demonstrated her courage on many occasions. At the point where the ferry is established the river is nearly a mile wide and in time of storms is very wild. The ferryboat is a heavy craft built on the plan of a scow. It is propelled by sail and in mild weather is manned by the girl alone, who only calls on assistance when the river is very wild.

One act of her heroism occurred last October. One evening a com-

BERTHA MORTON.

mercial traveler drove to the ferry and asked to be set across. He drove a spirited horse that after much difficulty was placed on board and secured to the rail running along the deck. When in the middle of the river the horse became frightened, broke his fastenings and jumped overboard, dragging the wagon with him. The commercial traveler, who was standing at the horse's head with his hand on the bridle, was struck by the wagon and knocked into the water. He couldn't swim, and he called to Miss Morton to save him. The brave girl was overboard in an instant, and being an accomplished swimmer, soon had hold of the drowing man, and after a hard struggle got him on board of the boat. Meantime the horse was floundering around in the water. As soon as the man was on the boat Miss Morton took a rope and swam to the horse. She fastened the rope around the animal's head and drawing the horse close to the craft secured the rope to the rail. In this way she towed the team ashore.

A few weeks ago she plunged into [illegible]

Miss Morton has been familiar with the river since infancy, and last fall took charge of the ferry.

CLEVELAND'S SUMMER HOME

Belvoir, at Washington, Where Other Presidents Have Lived.

President Cleveland has selected his summer home at Washington. The house is the Middleton House on Woodley Lane Road, and attached to it are forty-five acres of well-wooded land. The estate originally consisted of 101 acres, and was known as Belvoir, and this is the name by which it will be known during the four years of Cleveland's administration. Belvoir is within four miles of the White House, and commands a beau-

PRESIDENT CLEVELAND'S SUMMER HOME.

tiful view of the capital. The country around abounds in squirrels, the hunting of which was the favorite pastime of the President during his former administration. The building itself is old-fashioned and roomy, and everything about it suggests the antique.

Belvoir has had as guests many illustrious men, and it is related that President Washington once stood on the steps of the old portion of the house and remarked that the capital should either be built upon that spot or upon the spot which was afterward chosen. Gen. Winfield Scott had elected the spot as the site for the Soldiers' Home, but owing to some misunderstanding with the owner at that time it was not taken. Several Presidents have summered at the place. Van Buren spent several summers there, as did Tyler and Buchanan. It was at one time the summer residence of the Baron Geroult, the German minister to Washington about the time of the Mexican war.

It is not known definitely whether the house as it stands now was built by John Plater or Philip Barton Key. They were brothers-in-law, and both of them owned the estate about the year 1800, when the additions were made. Francis Scott Key, composer of "The Star Spangled Banner," spent the greater part of his youth there, and to-day the name of the author of the famous air can be seen carved on one of the window-panes in the front hall. Secretary of the Treasury Robert J. Walker owned the estate twenty-eight years ago, and from him it passed into the hands of the Middleton family.

Conflict of Brains.

A novel method of knocking out an enemy's brains is described by a gentleman who was camping some years ago in the Transvaal. Everything had been made snug for the night, and before turning in he was sitting with some of his companions about the fire. Soon an altercation sprang up between two of his attendants, a Mashoana and a Makololo, who were standing not far off. The object of discussion was a piece of meat they were broiling.

One word led to another, writes the traveler, till both men became extremely angry, and although I did not understand, they were doubtless using the choicest billingsgate that they could command. At length both rushed to the wagon. My servant whispered in my ear, "Assegai, boss!" so I sprang up to prevent them from obtaining these weapons, of which an abundant supply was fastened on the outside.

Frustrated in their attempt to arm themselves, they rushed upon each other. I would have interfered but that my countryman quietly said, "Let them fight it out, or you will have no peace." I let them do so.

Immediately they clasped each other and commenced butting their heads together like a pair of sheep. The blows were terrific, and sounded almost as loud as a well-executed clap of the hands. There was no attempt at boxing, only butting, and so effectually was it performed that blood began to flow from both of the antagonists' noses. After a lapse of five minutes, employed in this kind of exciting work, both sat down to recover breath in order to renew the encounter.

Then I interfered, and about half an hour later I saw the combatants sitting at the same fire and chatting to each other most cordially, as if the recent fight had no place even in their memories.

Dense.

A gentleman traveling in the country at Stoddard, N. H., where it is all rocks and bowlders, saw a boy of 12 or 14 hoeing in a corn-field on the side of what would be pasture land on anybody else's farm. The corn was rather poor-looking. The traveler reined in his horse and spoke to the boy. He said to him:

"Your corn looks rather small."

"Well," said the boy, "we planted dwarf corn."

"Well, it looks yellow, poor and thin."

"Well, we planted yellow corn."

"Well," said the traveler, "I don't mean that. It don't look as if you would get more than half a crop."

"I don't expect to. I planted it on shares."

Happiness Comes High.

Bridal couples, as a rule, fight shy of "bridal chambers" in fashionable hotels. They have learned that it [illegible]

HAS A WAR RECORD.

Judge Wm. Lochren, the New Commissioner of Pensions.

Judge Wm. Lochren, of Minnesota, the new Commissioner of Pensions, was born in Vermont 57 years ago, studied law there and was admitted to the bar. He went to Minnesota in 1857 and practiced his profession, but when the war broke out he was one of the first men in the State to

WILLIAM LOCHREN.

abandon his civil pursuits and enlist in the First Minnesota Regiment. His services during the war culminated at Gettysburg, where his regiment made the famous charge that checked Pickett's onslaught. Of the 300 men who made that charge only forty came out whole, and young Lochren, who started on the rush as a first lieutenant of Company E, came out in command of the regiment, every officer above his grade having been killed or wounded. When the war was over William Lochren returned to Minnesota and resumed the practice of law. In 1882 he was appointed by a Republican Governor to a judgeship on the Circuit bench, and at the expiration of his term was twice re-elected to the same place without opposition.

Scientific Modes of Execution.

"Tying weights to a boy's legs in hanging him, so that the drop will break his neck, is something that a New Jersey Sheriff has just thought of," said L. F. Dunn, of Philadelphia, to a St. Louis Globe-Democrat reporter. "He is to hang a youthful murderer who only weighs 92 pounds, and he says he will have to fasten ten pounds to each of the young fellow's legs to furnish weight enough to dislocate his vertebræ. This sounds pretty inhuman, doesn't it! But I once saw a heavy executioner in Turkey slide down the rope and fall on the suspended man's neck with all his avoirdupois to break the spinal column. Of course, it was a barbarous proceeding. The most careful and conscientious executioner I ever saw was near the dividing line between Turkey and Russia. I was riding through some woods when I suddenly found myself in a clearing before a cabin. A man was at the door tying a thread around a sheep's neck. I asked him why he was doing that. He picked up a cleaver, and, with a quick blow, cut off the sheep's head, making the cut exactly along the line of the red thread. 'You see now,' he said, 'why I did it. I tied that thread between two joints so that there would be no bone to offer resistance to the passage of the blade.' 'But why do you slaughter sheep in this way?' I asked. 'Come to-morrow to ——, (naming a near-by town) and you will see.' I was in the town the next day, and met the sheep-slayer. He was a public executioner, and he had a man to behead that day. I saw him do it. He had a sword with a curved blade. The blade and hilt were hollow, and there was quicksilver in the space, so that when the weapon was held aloft the quicksilver ran down into the hilt and steadied the hand, but when the sword was swung down the quicksilver ran to the end of the blade and gave added weight and impetus to the blow. The doomed man knelt and bent his head forward. The executioner tied a red thread carefully around the bared neck, and with one swing of the weapon cut off the head. It was a clean, scientific cut between the vertebræ, and the unfortunate man, I presume, never felt it."

An Indiscreet Hunter.

Patrick and Michael went out hunting one rainy day—it was the only day that they could get off. All went well with them until, when they were several miles from home, they discovered that neither one had brought a cartridge, and that not a shot could be fired.

"Begorra," said Pat, cheerfully, "what's that to do wid the huntin'? Is the want of a cartridge anny rayson to prevint a man from huntin'?"

"None at all," said Michael.

So they continued to hunt. By and by a rabbit started up close to Pat and then came to a stop, curiously watching the hunters. Pat instantly brought his gun to his shoulder.

"The gossoon that ye air!" exclaimed Mike. "Wud ye shoot him widout a carthridge?"

The rabbit hopped away.

"Whisht!" said Pat, angrily, "there ye go, shpilin' the sport wid yer blatherin' tongue!"

"Patrick! An' yer gun was not loaded!"

"Sure, ye spalpeen, but the rabbit would niver 'a' knowed is it ye'd hild yer blather!"

Good Use for the Money.

In Switzerland the manufacture of spirits is a government monopoly. The effect has been to furnish pure liquors at high prices, thus ameliorating the injurious results of the drinking habit and indirectly encouraging the consumption of cheaper wine and beer. The income from the sale of spirits is made to pay for the care of the poor and insane.

First Public Schools.

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